

Photography Taking High Place in Art of Portraiture

DURING the last two or three years portrait photography has been making wonderful strides both as a science and an art, but the portrait photographer has had his troubles and he will continue to have further troubles in advancing his profession.

In overcoming the difficulties of portrait photography Omaha's photographers have won credit and received acknowledgment from the whole artistic world. Such names as Sandberg & Eitner, Lumiere, Heyn, Rinehart, Osato, Cady and Rembrandt, as Omaha photographic studios, are known well throughout the United States and before two years have passed will be familiar in Paris and Berlin, for after winning recognition in art exhibitions in Kansas City and Philadelphia at least two photographers of this city will be represented at European exhibitions.

Work is Fascinating

There is strange fascination about the work of the portrait photographer—a lure that has drawn into this field the most able artistic talent in the world, driving men and women from paint and palette, oil and water colors, to the soft velours of the film and plate product. Since the days of the old tintype photographers have sought to "catch the soul of the subject," but only recently have they been able to bring the art to such a fine perfection that the most elusive expressions are captured and retained, through the process of development and printing.

While color photography is receiving its share of attention and the "touching up" work is by no means ignored the great ambition of the commercial photographer is to not only become proficient in these, but to so perfect the portrait photograph that it will be, not simply a symbol in lights and shades, but, like the work of the great masters, a thing alive.

Wonderful Results

"It is wonderful," said a clean-cut, high-type man, as he searched with his eyes every detail of a portrait exhibited by a local photographer. "Look at the eyes, the mouth, the expression. The portrait seems to be on the verge of speech." And the photographer standing back in the crowd, hearing this, was greatly pleased, for he had done his work well—he had "caught the soul of his subject." He had produced a piece of merchandise for a price, but in doing this he had done more—he had captured a priceless thing.

Artists may toil long and lovingly over their canvases, completing after days of labor and nights devoid of rest, a life-likeness of a man or woman, expressions masterfully depicted with deft touch. These artists may put into the smear on the canvas the hopes and despairs of a great, ambitious soul. Their work may be good, but in all its fineness it does not attain the mechanical perfection of the portrait photograph.

Not Everyone Succeeds

Naturally not every portrait photograph is a work of art, nor does every photographer catch the evanescent something which will make the limp canvas or the dead paper radiate high emotions. Neither does the artist. With the latter there must be within himself the power and the vision—and a model passing fair. The photographer's chief hope rests with his subject. Any stupid person may not walk into the photographer's studio and pose for a masterpiece. The photographer may do his best and the best may be very good, technically excellent. That is the mechanics of the trade. The product of real art comes of expression, a flicker of smile, a gleam in the window of the soul, a light of love on the face, high hope, horror, fear, hate, transmuted by the alchemy of the camera and potent mixtures into shades and lights and sepia.

Chance plays its part in the portrait photographer's work. Beauty may become commonplace in portraiture; ugliness and the grotesque by that indefinable magic of "expression" may rise to the grand or the sublime. It all depends on the fleeting lights of the countenance at the instant the camera snaps.

"Smile," and It's All Over

"Smile," the artist admonishes, "hold it. All over." And the subject perhaps sat there with a silly grin on his face or into his brain may have crept, out of the latent emotions, a memory of the May-time of life, of playmates of old; of a wild, ancient love; of a hot passion, that could never die, but lay dormant; for such thoughts swiftly come and go and sometimes they shine out and show on the portrait. Then is created a masterpiece of portrait photography.

Such things do not lie within the hands of all portrait photographers nor do they come his way so frequently. They are the possibilities.

Examples of Portrait Photography Done in Omaha



The realities he must meet and to this end he toils with his "technique" until he has, by study and many an experiment, come to understand the tone value of every smile, every pose, every splash of sunshine, and every light or shadow on the faces of his subjects, and can rapidly pose, "take" and produce portrait photographs for a fixed price.

Code of Ethics Strong

The portrait photographer has a code of ethics just as strong as the artist or the sculptor, but, unlike the artist and the sculptor, he is forced to consider the business side of his profession to a much larger degree, because the photographer is in business to make money, while the artist or sculptor is occupied by his profession because he is willing to starve and think about money afterwards.

No matter how mercenary the portrait photographer, he always tries to make his picture worthy of the signature of his firm, and it is a difficult proposition to make a subject behave sufficiently to take a good picture, especially as all subjects have a determination to have their pictures taken in a way that will make them appear just as untrue to life as possible. And he has a terrible time of it. Fat people all want to appear thin, and all thin people want to appear stouter. The result is they look very stiff and unlike their true self.

Only Two Classes

There are just two classes of people from the photographer's standpoint. They are either satisfied with their personal appearance or they are dissatisfied with their personal appearance, and one is just as bad as the other when they have a picture taken. The self-satisfied kind never believes that the photographer is going to take a picture that justifies their beauty, while the dissatisfied kind are afraid the photographer will take a picture that is precisely like themselves.

Between the two the photogra-



These examples of portrait photography are furnished from the Sandberg & Eitner Studio; the originals were exhibited at Kansas City, and on request were sent from there to Philadelphia, and will later be taken to Europe for exhibition purposes. It is impossible in a newspaper cut to reproduce the background, the delicate light and shade effects and other details that make the portrait photograph a thing of rare beauty.

pher's existence is a rocky one, and and troubles, the portrait photographer is a cheerful sort and he merely reaches the top. But for all his trials smiles tolerantly on the kicker and think just the opposite.

subjects. Not one person in a hundred can enter a photograph studio without experiencing some such feeling of nervousness as comes to a boy at his first party. Before the camera the nervousness is accentuated and it often happens it is almost impossible to get the subject, be it man, woman or child, to remain in a stationary position. Some are not only unable to remain still, but they are unable to keep from talking, and, of course, it is difficult to secure a photograph when the subject is busy talking. An expert photographer can take a picture, and a good one at that, even though the subject is spouting at a great rate. By getting in the light line and watching carefully, the picture can be taken at the instant the subject takes a breath. For some people it is absolutely necessary to take the picture in that manner because of the facial characteristics, which are only true to life when the mouth is in an active position.

Small children are probably the hardest for the photographer to handle. In the first place it is not easy to tell when a child appears in his natural state. His face is hard to read, and it is difficult to make him look true to life. In addition, most children are either afraid to have a picture taken, just as they are afraid to have their hair cut, or they don't wish to have it taken, and are therefore very belligerent.

Taking a Boy

Mr. Eitner of the Sandberg & Eitner studio relates his experience with a child who was to have his picture taken, and his experience is representative. The boy, who was about 11 years of age, made up his mind that he would not have his picture taken. He kicked and struggled and refused to take his position before the camera. Mr. Eitner immediately sized up the situation, and began to question the boy about topics foreign to photography. The lad answered readily, so that Eitner knew he just wished to be stubborn. Eitner continued to talk to the lad until he asked him if he studied physics at school. The boy said no and Eitner told him that he should take it because he would learn about photography if he did. The lad appeared a little interested and Eitner began to ask him if he wanted to look at the camera. The boy said yes, and he looked.

After he had seen what he wanted to, Eitner took a plate holder and inserted it in the machine. The boy was instantly suspicious and set up a roar. Eitner very cleverly showed him an empty plate holder and appeased him. Then Eitner snapped the picture into focus and showed the lad his own reflection in the lens. That so tickled the lad that he momentarily forgot his stubbornness, and when Eitner asked him if he wanted to snap a picture of him, the boy willingly acceded. The boy took several pictures of Eitner and Eitner took several of the boy. And Eitner says the lad took the best picture he ever had taken of himself.

Cow Puncher Stamped

Eitner relates one of his experiences in Cheyenne. A big cowpuncher came into Cheyenne from the Big Horn basin and a friend persuaded him to have his photo taken. The cowpuncher was dubious, but finally agreed. He entered the studio where Eitner was employed and stuck his map in front of the camera. Eitner swung the big camera around and the cowpuncher got a glimpse of the bright lens. Instantly his hand flew to his hip and a gun, which, Eitner says, looked to be as big as a battleship appeared on the scene. Eitner and the cowboy's friend made an immediate retreat into secluded parts while the cowpuncher yelled his head off. They finally emerged from hiding and got the cowman to de-st-

But circumstance was against taking the picture and circumstance had its way. Just as everything was all set and the cowboy had been told to think about his best girl, the friend, who had been curiously investigating the establishment, ran across a flashlight stick which happened to be loaded. He negligently pressed the button and the powder exploded. The cowpuncher gave one whoop and fled for the street. Eitner ducked behind a background stand to escape the rush and the friend tried to faint. By the time Eitner got up nerve enough to peek cautiously out of the window the cowboy was making tracks up the street and at the rate he was going made the Big Horn basin seem a short distance away.

Photographers who have been in the business a long time can relate experiences by the hour and, if they don't get mad at so many things, their life would be one round of continuous laughter. But of course they got mad because they are so wrapped up in the ethics that the humorous side never occurs to them.

A prospective subject for a photograph no more than enters the door of a studio than the photographer begins to study the characteristics. The manner of sitting, the manner of talking, everything is detected by the photographer and he immediately knows just how he must handle the subject. Sometimes they make mistakes and that is why there are second and even third sittings. The good subject is easily taken successfully at the first sitting, but the bad subject demands more than one sitting.

Facing the Camera

When a subject steps into the studio and takes the position in front of the camera the trouble begins. In the first place the subject has previously determined just how the picture must be taken and nothing can change that determination because of the inherited vanity of all people. There is only one way to do it and that is to make the subject think that he gets what he wants and not what the photographer wants. That is one of the secrets of the successful photographer and it is fascinating to watch a clever photographer take a picture of a particularly obstinate subject.

Everybody who has a picture taken spends considerable time primping and fussing to make themselves appear presentable. No one but the dapper young chap who looks like a clothing advertisement or the debutante who has just graduated from a boarding school can spruce up for a picture and look natural. The ordinary person looks as if he or she had been packed in excelsior for a couple of months. All of which makes trouble for the camera man, because he doesn't dare suggest that the sitter look unnatural or a near riot night follow.

Nerves a Factor

Another thing that bothers the photographer is nervousness of the

Fashion Expert Predicts that Women Will Soon Don Trousers

On the eve of his departure for France, M. Paul Poiret, the noted couturier, told a New York reporter who was seeking for a glimpse of the misty future that the woman of tomorrow will undoubtedly wear trousers.

"Women will not wear the ordinary masculine trousers that we wear, however," said M. Poiret, pointing with a smile to a checked pair of his own, "but something more elegant, more feminine,

indeed, a woman is artistic. But in this respect the American woman cannot compare with the French woman. She is more staid, more matter of fact, not so susceptible to emotion. She does not express her temperament and her individuality in her dress as the French woman does. It is not the designer who creates an artificial desire for styles. The desire is there; the designer simply makes propositions and the women choose."

M. Poiret, by the way, does not design costumes. He creates them first hand. He says there is a loss of the creator's sensibility when his ideas must pass through the hands of a dressmaker before it becomes the finished product.

There is a clash of course, a merging of individualities, or something in that broad general effect that is not at all desirable.

M. Poiret does not look or talk like an originator of feminine styles that has set two continents agog. He talks in a calm, low voice, and any extravagance of gesture that one might expect is quite lacking.

"The American woman is extravagant in her dress and she doesn't know it," said M. Poiret. "The American taste generally is extravagant. Look at the paper on this wall. It is covered with flowers and designs so that the simplicity of the background is lost. It is the same with Americans in all things. The women think that my styles are extravagant and bizarre because to them simplicity has become extravagant and bizarre. My style is simplicity itself, but they do not recognize it as yet. When my wife appeared with a plain white hat people turned to stare at her in surprise. And yet the

women who were doing so wore in their own hats gigantic feathers that were the height of extravagance."

M. Poiret is optimistic. He says that the wave of Poiret simplicity will surely submerge America from coast to coast. At the present he must be content as the teacher of an esoteric cult. M. Poiret was investigated into talking of the feminist movement about as readily as the average citizen is induced to pay a debt.

"That is a matter of politics," he said. "But feminism, I will admit, has already tended to make women more logical, more simple. And when they get the vote they will become even more simple and logical in dress as in everything else."

And so he bowed himself out of America.—New York Sun.